

ADULT EDUCATION REORGANIZATION

**P-16 Council
Agenda Item A-2
September 9, 2003**

Information

Reorganization Executive Order 2003-600, signed by Governor Paul Patton and effective June 16, 2003, abolished the Department for Adult Education and Literacy within the Cabinet for Workforce Development. The executive order decreed that all of the duties, responsibilities, and functions of the DAEL are to be reconstituted within the Council on Postsecondary Education. The Council approved a plan to accept the programs and functions of adult education and literacy at its July 28 meeting.

For Kentucky to reach the national average in educational attainment, it must reach out to both traditional and adult learners. Our literacy needs are great. The National Adult Literacy Survey of 1994 and the Kentucky Adult Literacy Survey issued in 1997 reported that one million Kentuckians, or 40 percent of the working-age population, functioned at the two lowest levels of literacy; yet only five percent of the target population was participating in adult education programs. We have made great progress over the past several years, beginning with the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990, which brought standards and accountability to K-12 education and transferred adult education services to the Cabinet for Workforce Development. Adult education programs merged in 1993 with community-based programs offered through local literacy councils to create the Department for Adult Education and Literacy within the Governor's Cabinet. With the passage of Senate Bill 1 (*The Adult Education Act of 2000*), the Council on Postsecondary Education assumed the responsibility for policy and budget, as well as the development of a twenty-year strategy to improve the educational attainment of low-skilled Kentuckians in partnership with the DAEL.

Clearly partnership with the CPE has made a significant difference. Adult education enrollments increased by 69 percent between 2000 and 2002, and Kentucky had the sixth largest increase nationwide—57 percent—in the number of Kentuckians earning a GED between 2000 and 2001. We want more of these GED graduates to enroll in colleges and earn degrees.

Although we have made significant progress, there is much yet to do in order to reach the 2010 adult education enrollment goal of 300,000. Content standards must be aligned with entrance requirements for postsecondary education through our P-16 initiatives, including using the American Diploma Project benchmarks to modify the adult education curriculum. Adult education instructors must be part of our teacher quality initiatives. And the on-to-postsecondary rate must improve to at least 40 percent of GED graduates to ensure adults have the skills needed to compete in the knowledge-based economy.

Kentucky adult education is more than the GED. By placing adult education programs under the postsecondary education umbrella, we can ensure that education for all adults will be better coordinated and more people can be reached. This can be accomplished while preserving the diversity of the provider network, including local boards of education, literacy councils,

universities, and the KCTCS institutions offering services to a wide array of learners. And by working through our state and local P-16 councils, we will create a truly seamless system of education to benefit the lives of all Kentuckians.